

**LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS & CONTENT AREA
STANDARDS:
Guidance for North Dakota Schools
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Since the late 1980s, raising standards in the major curriculum subjects has gained momentum in states and districts across the country. What about Limited English Proficient students and standards? Can we expect the same standards for students who are from different language and cultural backgrounds? *How* can we expect students from diverse backgrounds to meet the same challenging content standards as all children?

1. What are the current requirements for standards and assessment?

Federal legislation states that standards are for all children:

Title VII of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act states...

"The Purpose of this part is to educate limited English proficient children and youth to meet the same rigorous standards for academic performance expected of all children and youth, including meeting challenging state content standards and challenging state student performance standards in academic areas." (*Improving America's Schools Act, 1994*).

LEP students are protected under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." (U. S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, 1992). Limited English proficient students have the right to be included in the same curriculum and assessment program as other students. School districts must be accountable for all students.

2. Who are limited English proficient (LEP) students?

A student who is limited English proficient includes: an individual—

- (A) who—
- (i) was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; or
 - (ii) is a Native American or Alaska Native or who is a native resident of the outlying areas and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on such individual's level of English language proficiency; or
 - (iii) is migratory and whose native language is other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and
- (B) who has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and whose difficulties may deny such individual the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English or to participate fully in our society.
- (*Improving America's Schools Act - Title VII, Sept. 28 1994*).

LEP students are the fastest-growing population group in North Dakota and the nation. They include:

- American Indian students,
- Hispanic migrant students,
- Refugee students from a variety of countries,
- Adopted students from other countries,
- Other students who have immigrated or were born here.

3. What are some of the problems?

- Many standards, benchmarks and performance activities developed by states and local districts require a high level of academic English language proficiency.
- Children learn conversational English fast - but it can take seven years or longer to become proficient in academic language.
- Standards-based assessments require a high level of academic English language proficiency.
- How can students who are not proficient in English meet the same standards as students who are proficient in English?
- How do we include LEP students in statewide achievement programs?

4. What is North Dakota doing?

A. North Dakota Task Force on LEP Students and State Content Standards.

The Department of Public Instruction has formed a task force to develop guidance for school districts in North Dakota using standards with LEP students. This committee of approximately 15 - 20 individuals has completed the first phase of the guidance document for LEP students and state content standards. A draft of the guidance for the North Dakota English Language arts standards and LEP students has been developed.

B. LEP Students and Assessment

The Department has developed a policy on the inclusion of LEP students in the state assessment program. The State Task Force will develop further policy and guidance on the assessment of LEP students in state and district assessment programs.

5. Who is involved with the development of guidance?

A State Task Force was convened in an effort to assist the State Department of Public Instruction in developing guidance for schools. The purpose of the Task Force for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students and Content Area Standards is to develop guidance for schools with students who have limited English proficiency.

The guidance will assist state educators to help these students meet the challenging content standards set by school districts and the State. State and Federal policy determines that the state content standards are for all students. LEP students have a right to be included in the same standards-based curriculum established for mainstream students.

6. How is this project being funded?

The project has been funded from Title VII of the Improving America's Schools Act funds and the Refugee Children School Impact Grant. Title VII State Grants are awarded to collect data and provide technical assistance to school districts helping limited English proficient students develop English language proficiency and reach challenging state content standards. Refugee Children School Impact Grant funding comes from the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the Department of Health and Human Services and provides assistance to schools and state agencies experiencing refugee resettlement.

7. What has the Task Force accomplished so far?

- The Task Force has addressed modifications for the majority of English Language Arts Standards.
- The Task Force developed levels of English language proficiency to use in the guidance.
- The Task Force has discussed the format for developing guidance for the content areas of math, science and social studies.
- The Task Force has brainstormed the introductory/supplemental materials that will be included in the guidance.
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8. What is the future plan of action?

- Finish guidance for the English language arts standards.
- Write other guidance materials: e.g., introduction, definitions, and resources.
- Develop guidance for other state content standards: e.g., math, science, and social studies.
- Develop guidance for assessment of LEP students.

Tentative Schedule

Phase 1 – May 2000 - June 2001

Documents: Section/Document #2 “Guidance for Limited English Proficient Students and North Dakota Content Standards: English Language Arts” & #1: “Guidance for the Instruction of Limited English Proficient Students”

Accomplishments: State Task Force develops draft of Section/Document #2 and creates outline and recommendations for Section/Document #1

Phase 2 – July 2001 - June 2002

Documents: Section/Document #3 “Guidance for Limited English Proficient Students and North Dakota Content Standards: Math, Science & Social Studies” & Section/Document #1.

Plans: State Task Force reviews and approves Section/Document #2 and completes work on Section/Document #1. Task Force develops draft guidance for math, science and social studies content standards.
Begin planning for Section/Document #4. Disseminate Sections 1 and 2 and begin training statewide on guidance documents to date.

Phase 3 – July 2002 - June 2003

Documents: Section/Document #4: “Guidance for Assessment and Limited English Proficient Students”

Plans: Develop guidance for assessment and LEP students. Disseminate Section 3 and provide training statewide on all documents to date.

Phase 4 – July 2003 – June 2004

Documents: All documents are completed

Plans: Training and implementation on all sections continued, with emphasis on assessment. Review documents for any necessary revisions or modifications.
Disseminate complete and final documents.